

What is claimed is:

1. A method for securely storing data for an owner, comprising:
  2. ~~storing the data for the owner;~~
  3. ~~automatically assigning a secret device to the owner for accessing the stored data;~~
  5. ~~automatically escrowing the secret device conditioned on the occurrence of an event;~~
  7. ~~receiving verification of the occurrence of the event, and accessing the stored data with the escrowed secret device.~~
1. 2. The method of claim 1, wherein ~~storing the data further comprises entering the data on a virtual wallet application for the owner.~~
1. 3. The method of claim 2, wherein ~~entering the data further comprises entering the data by the owner at a terminal.~~
1. 4. The method of claim 3, wherein ~~entering the data further comprises entering the data by the owner at the terminal coupled to a server.~~
1. 5. The method of claim 4, wherein the terminal further comprises a personal computer.
1. 6. The method of claim 4, wherein the server further comprises the server of a trusted third party.
1. 7. The method of claim 6, wherein the trusted third party's server further comprises a financial institution server.

1           8.       The method of claim 7, wherein the financial institution further  
2       comprises a bank.

1           9.       The method of claim 4, wherein entering the data further comprises  
2       entering the data by the owner at the terminal coupled to the server over a network.

1           10.      The method of claim 9, wherein the network further comprises a  
2       private network.

1           11.      The method of claim 9, wherein the network further comprises a public  
2       network.

1           12.      The method of claim 11, wherein the public network further comprises  
2       the internet.

1           13.      The method of claim 2, wherein entering the data further comprises  
2       entering the data for the owner on the virtual wallet application having a virtual  
3       executor function.

1           14.      The method of claim 2, wherein entering the data further comprises  
2       entering the data for the owner on the virtual wallet application having a virtual  
3       archivist function.

1           15.      The method of claim 1, wherein storing the data further comprises  
2       entering the data by the owner at a terminal.

1           16.      The method of claim 15, wherein the terminal further comprises a  
2       personal computer.

1           17. The method of claim 15, wherein entering the data further comprises  
2        entering the data by the owner at the terminal coupled to a server.

1           18. The method of claim 17, wherein entering the data further comprises  
2        entering the data on a virtual wallet application residing at least in part on the server.

1           19. The method of claim 17, wherein entering the data further comprises  
2        entering the data on a virtual wallet application residing at least in part on the  
3        terminal.

1           20. The method of claim 1, wherein storing the data further comprises  
2        storing at least one category of information by a virtual wallet application for the  
3        owner selected from a group of information consisting of identification information,  
4        authentication information, certificate information, access key information, PIN  
5        number information, credit card account information, debit card information, bank  
6        account information, and other personal information.

1           21. The method of claim 1, wherein assigning the secret device further  
2        comprises automatically assigning the secret device to the owner by a virtual wallet  
3        application.

1           22. The method of claim 21, wherein automatically assigning the secret  
2        device further comprises automatically assigning the secret device to the owner at a  
3        terminal.

1           23. The method of claim 22, automatically assigning the secret device  
2        further comprises automatically assigning the secret device by the virtual wallet  
3        application residing at least in part on a server coupled to the terminal.

1           24. The method of claim 23, wherein the terminal further comprises a  
2 personal computer.

1           25. The method of claim 23, wherein the server further comprises the  
2 server of a trusted third party.

1           26. The method of claim 25, wherein the trusted third party's server further  
2 comprises a financial institution server.

1           27. The method of claim 26, wherein the financial institution further  
2 comprises a bank.

1           28. The method of claim 23, wherein automatically assigning the secret  
2 device further comprises automatically sending information about the secret device to  
3 the owner at the terminal coupled to the server over a network.

1           29. The method of claim 28, wherein the network further comprises a  
2 private network.

1           30. The method of claim 28, wherein the network further comprises a  
2 public network.

1           31. The method of claim 30, wherein the public network further comprises  
2 the internet.

1           32. The method of claim 1, wherein automatically assigning the secret  
2 device further comprises automatically assigning the secret device with at least two  
3 access aspects.

1           33. The method of claim 32, wherein automatically assigning the secret  
2 device further comprises automatically assigning the secret device with an owner's  
3 access aspect and a trusted third party's access aspect.

1           34. The method of claim 33, wherein automatically assigning the owner's  
2 access aspect further comprises automatically sending the owner's access aspect to the  
3 owner.

1           35. The method of claim 33, wherein automatically assigning the trusted  
2 third party's access aspect further comprises automatically storing the trusted third  
3 party's access aspect.

1           36. The method of claim 35, wherein automatically storing the trusted third  
2 party's access aspect further comprises automatically storing the trusted third party's  
3 access aspect by a virtual wallet application for the owner.

1           37. The method of claim 36, wherein automatically storing the trusted third  
2 party's access aspect further comprises automatically storing the trusted third party's  
3 access aspect by a virtual executor function of the virtual wallet application for the  
4 owner.

1           38. The method of claim 37, wherein automatically storing the trusted third  
2 party's access aspect further comprises automatically storing the trusted third party's  
3 access aspect by the virtual executor function of the virtual wallet application on a  
4 server of the trusted third party.

1           39. The method of claim 38, wherein the trusted third party server further  
2 comprises a financial institution computer.

1           40. The method of claim 39, wherein the financial institution further  
2 comprises a bank.

1           41. The method of claim 1, wherein automatically escrowing the secret  
2 device further comprises automatically escrowing a ~~trusted third party's access aspect~~  
3 of the secret device for the owner.

1           42. The method of claim 41, wherein automatically escrowing the trusted  
2 ~~third party's access aspect further comprises automatically storing the trusted third~~  
3 ~~party's access aspect by a virtual wallet application for the owner.~~

1           43. The method of claim 42, wherein automatically storing the trusted third  
2 ~~party's access aspect further comprises automatically storing the trusted third party's~~  
3 ~~access aspect by a virtual executor function of the virtual wallet.~~

1           44. The method of claim 41, wherein automatically escrowing the trusted  
2 ~~third party's access aspect further comprises automatically storing the trusted third~~  
3 ~~party's access aspect conditioned on the occurrence of the event affecting the owner.~~

1           45. The method of claim 44, wherein the event affecting the owner further  
2 comprises the owner's death.

1           46. The method of claim 44, wherein the event affecting the owner further  
2 comprises the owner's incompetence.

1           47. The method of claim 1, wherein automatically escrowing the secret  
2 device further comprises automatically escrowing secret access information for the  
3 owner.

1  48. The method of claim 47, wherein automatically escrowing secret  
2 access information further comprises automatically storing at least one type of secret  
3 access information selected from a group of secret access information consisting of  
4 identification information, authentication information, certificate information, access  
5 key information, PIN number information, and password information.

1 49. The method of claim 1, wherein automatically escrowing the secret  
2 device further comprises automatically escrowing decryption infrastructure for the  
3 owner.

1 50. The method of claim 49, wherein automatically escrowing decryption  
2 infrastructure further comprises automatically storing at least one decryption  
3 infrastructure selected from a group of decryption infrastructure consisting of public  
4 key cryptography infrastructure, electronic document infrastructure, digital signature  
5 infrastructure, user name infrastructure, password infrastructure, fingerprint scanner  
6 infrastructure, and secret key infrastructure.

1 51. The method of claim 1, wherein receiving the verification further  
2 comprises receiving the verification by a trusted third party for the owner.

1 52. The method of claim 1, wherein receiving the verification further  
2 comprises receiving the verification from a personal representative of the owner.

1 53. The method of claim 1, wherein receiving the verification further  
2 comprises receiving the verification of an event affecting the owner.

1 54. The method of claim 53, wherein the event affecting the owner further  
2 comprises the owner's death.

1        55. The method of claim 53, wherein the event affecting the owner further  
2 comprises the owner's incompetence.

1        56. The method of claim 1, wherein receiving the verification further  
2 comprises entering the verification of the occurrence of the event on a virtual wallet  
3 application of the owner.

1        57. The method of claim 56, wherein entering the verification further  
2 comprises entering the verification on a virtual executor function of the virtual wallet  
3 application.

1        58. The method of claim 57, wherein entering the verification further  
2 comprises entering the verification on the virtual executor function of the virtual  
3 wallet application on a server.

1        59. The method of claim 58, wherein entering the verification further  
2 comprises entering the verification on the virtual executor function of the virtual  
3 wallet application on the server of a trusted third party.

1        60. The method of claim 59, wherein the trusted third party further  
2 comprises a financial institution.

1        61. The method of claim 60, wherein the financial institution further  
2 comprises a bank.

1        62. The method of claim 1, wherein accessing the stored data further  
2 comprises accessing the data stored in a virtual wallet application of the owner.

1       63. The method of claim 62, wherein accessing the stored data further  
2 ~~comprises accessing the data stored in a virtual executor function of the virtual wallet~~  
3 application on a server.

1       64. The method of claim 63, wherein accessing the stored data further  
2 ~~comprises accessing the data stored in the virtual executor function of the virtual~~  
3 wallet application on the server of a trusted third party.

1       65. The method of claim 64, wherein the trusted third party further  
2 comprises a financial institution.

1       66. The method of claim 65, wherein the financial institution further  
2 comprises a bank.

1       67. The method of claim 1, wherein accessing the stored data further  
2 ~~comprises accessing the data using a trusted third party's access aspect of the secret~~  
3 device.

1       68. The method of claim 67, wherein accessing the data further comprises  
2 ~~accessing the data using the trusted third party's access aspect of the secret device~~  
3 stored by a virtual executor function of a virtual wallet application.

1       69. The method of claim 68, wherein accessing the data further comprises  
2 ~~accessing the data using the trusted third party's access aspect of the secret device~~  
3 stored by the virtual executor function of the virtual wallet application on a server of  
4 the trusted third party.

1       70. The method of claim 69, wherein the trusted third party further  
2 comprises a financial institution.

1           71. The method of claim 70, wherein the financial institution further  
2 comprises a bank.

1           72. The method of claim 1, further comprising automatically updating  
2 technology aspects of the stored data.

1           73. The method of claim 72, wherein automatically updating the  
2 technology aspects further comprises automatically updating technology aspects of the  
3 data by a virtual archivist function of a virtual wallet application.

1           74. The method of claim 73, wherein automatically updating the  
2 technology aspects by the virtual archivist function further comprises automatically  
3 updating the technology aspects by the virtual archivist function of the virtual wallet  
4 application on a server.

1           75. The method of claim 74, wherein automatically updating the  
2 technology aspects further comprises automatically updating the technology aspects  
3 by the virtual archivist function of the virtual wallet application on the server of a  
4 trusted third party.

1           76. The method of claim 75, wherein the trusted third party further  
2 comprises a financial institution.

1           77. The method of claim 76, wherein the financial institution further  
2 comprises a bank.

1           78. The method of claim 1, wherein automatically updating the technology  
2 aspects further comprises automatically updating at least one technology aspect of the  
3 data selected from a group of technology aspects consisting of technology related to  
4 signing a document, encryption technology, technology related to a key for signing a

5 document, technology related to a document itself, technology related to a certificate  
6 revocation list, technology related to a time stamp, and technology related to a notary  
7 stamp.

1  79. The method of claim 1, wherein storing the data further comprises  
2 receiving the data from another party by a virtual wallet application for the owner.

1 80. The method of claim 79, wherein receiving the data further comprises  
2 receiving the data by the virtual wallet application for the owner by electronic mail.

1  81. A system for securely storing data for an owner, comprising:  
2 means for storing the data for the owner;  
3 means associated with the storing means for automatically assigning a  
4 secret device to the owner for accessing the stored data;  
5 means associated with the storing means for automatically escrowing  
6 the secret device conditioned upon the occurrence of an event;  
7 means associated with the storing means for receiving verification of  
8 the occurrence of the event; and  
9 means associated with the storing means for accessing the stored data  
10 with the escrowed secret device.

1 82. The system of claim 81, wherein the means for storing the data further  
2 comprises a server.

1 83. The system of claim 82, wherein the server further comprises the server  
2 of a trusted third party.

1  84. The system of claim 83, wherein the means for storing the data further  
2 comprises a terminal coupled to the server.

1 *Claim 85*  
2 85. The system of claim 84, wherein the means for storing the data further  
comprises a network coupling the terminal to the server.

1 86. The system of claim 81, wherein the means for automatically assigning  
2 the secret device further comprises a server.

1 87. The system of claim 86, wherein the server further comprises the server  
2 of a trusted third party.

1 88. The system of claim 81, wherein the means for automatically assigning  
2 the secret device further comprises the server coupled to a terminal over a network.

1 89. The system of claim 81, wherein the means for receiving the  
2 verification further comprises a server.

1 90. The system of claim 89, wherein the server further comprises the server  
2 of a trusted third party.

1 91. The system of claim 81, wherein the means for accessing the stored  
2 data further comprises a server.

1 92. The system of claim 91, wherein the server further comprises the server  
2 of a trusted third party.

*Claim 92*